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	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	M-00	DCP-00	NSAE-00
	PA-00	PM-00	GIWI-00	DOHS-00	IRM-00	SA-00	CRYE-00
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR, PREL, KPAO, OPRC, SY

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction": IIC, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, Iraq (12/16-18

1. Summary: Syrian papers over the weekend reported the visit to Damascus of Amr Mousa, SecGen of the Arab League, who met with President Asad to ease growing tension in Syrian-Lebanese relations following the assassination of anti-Syria MP and journalist Gebran Tueni.

Papers also reported UN Security Council resolution 1644 that extended the UN investigation into the murder of Lebanese PM al-Hariri for six months and cited the appointment of Belgian magistrate Serge Brammertz, who will succeed German investigator Detlev Mehlis.

Hanan Hamad, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, refuted President Bush's remarks that Iraqi democracy will

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spread to the entire region, particularly to Syria and Iran, noting that Syrians and Iranians live on this planet and are aware of what is happening in Iraq.

End of summary.

### 2. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad discusses with SecGen of the Arab League recent developments in the Lebanese arena and the Arab League's role in enhancing Arab solidarity" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/16)

"Russia and China reiterate rejection of politicizing the IIC probe. Russia: The draft of resolution of 1644 did not reflect the real picture of the investigation. China: We reject the principle of sanctions against Syria" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/18)

"Belgian magistrate Serge Brammertz succeeds German investigator Detlev Mehlis. The Security Council extends the mission of the UN investigation team into the al-Hariri assassination. Mikdad [Syria's permanent envoy to the UN]: Resolution 1644 was restricted and didn't achieve the goals sought by some sides" (Government-owned 12/16)

"A Russian General: It is Russia's duty to defend Syria" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/16)

"Richard Baker [Member of the National Committee of the US Anti-War Movement]: America intends to occupy the region and is using the Mehlis report to discourage Syria's stands" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/16)

"Subsequent to his meeting with Minister of Information Dakhlalla, Richard Baker: Economic sanctions are a crime against humanity" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/18)

"Minister of Information Dakhlalla extends condolences on Tueni" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/16)

"Lebanese Parliament Speaker Berri criticizes the cabinet's rush to call for expanded investigation" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/18)

"Rice reiterates accusation against Syria without any evidence" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/17)

"Lebanese warnings against internationalization and fabrication of crisis continue. Ministers of the Amal

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movement and Hizbollah insist upon boycotting the government" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/17)

"Rafsanjani condemns US pressure on Syria. A huge sit-in in al-Beqqa to express solidarity with Syria's position" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/17)

" Hamas leads in the elections. Hamas and the Palestinian Authority criticize the US intervention in Palestinian Affairs" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/18)

" Hamas achieves progress in the municipal elections in Palestine. A Palestinian martyred in Jerusalem. A demonstration in Ballin to protest the Israeli separation

wall" (Government-owned Tishreen 12/17)

"Israeli warplanes' flight turns the Gaza strip into a training field" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/16)

"Iraqi election ends amid reported forging of the vote results" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 12/16)

"Iraqis thank Syria for facilitating voting" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 12/16)

"The Independent Higher Commission for Elections in Iraq receives 178 complaints [of illegal election propaganda.] Ten million Iraqis participated in the legislative election" (Government-owned Tishreen, 12/17)

### 3. Editorial Block Quotes:

#### "Preaching Democracy"

Hanan Hamad, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, commented (12/17): "President Bush's renewed preaching that the Iraqi model of democracy will spread to the countries of the region, particularly to Syria and Iran, coincided this time not only with the daily revelations about crimes of torture and human right violations, but also with a public admission that the Pentagon launched a \$400-million psychological warfare operation to improve the image of the United States in the world by buying local pens and voices to serve American interests. Reports also revealed that the Pentagon routinely spies on American anti-war groups, including activists against the Iraq war. "As for the image campaign, it is being managed by specialized companies. It has been proved that Iraqi papers have published articles fabricating positive things about

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the occupation to mislead the Iraqis. And there have been many reports that writers and journalists in neighboring "Arab" media have been paid to escalate the campaign against Syria.

"As for spying on the American opponents of the war, NBC television network disclosed that the Pentagon possesses technological means and databases to collect information about the opponents of the Iraq war and watch peace demonstrations, and that it monitored an increase in communications between the protest groups that use the internet. This shows that Bush's administration is about to launch a new McCarthy-style campaign similar to the campaign that was launched in the fifties and sixties to harass extensive groups of leftist writers, intellectuals, and artists based on a law that took the name of its drafter, McCarthy, and allowed individuals to spy on one another, even within a single family, or similar to the campaign that allowed intelligence monitoring of the opponents of the Vietnam War. Both campaigns were black spots in the record of freedom and democracy in which the American people take pride.

"Now the Bush administration is further tarnishing this record. The US president is trying to convince others that his slogans are sincere, when these slogans are being violated daily in Afghanistan and Iraq, in the dark chambers of the secret prisons, and aboard the CIA planes.

"But the question that the US president must be asked is this: Does he think Syria and Iran exist on another planet and that their peoples are unaware of what has been happening in Iraq since its occupation in March 2003, so that he can deceive them with his "democratic" preaching?" "Who is Blocking the Investigation?"

Ali Nasrallah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (12/16): "The second report of the international investigation commission into the assassination of former Lebanese PM al-Hariri is full of flaws and falsehoods....

"The language of skepticism, criticism, and accusation that the report uses is unacceptable.... Syria has stressed repeatedly that revealing the truth behind the assassination is a Syrian need, just as it is a Lebanese need, because Syria was the party most harmed by the crime and by all the unrest in Lebanon - unrest that is planned on the political

and security levels by American and Israeli circles....

"Syria has expressed its desire to cooperate fully with the investigation commission because the truth will confirm its innocence and foil the conspiracy and the horrible hostile plan that was drafted to undermine the fraternal relations

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with Lebanon and to serve the Zionist scheme and the schemes of the neoconservatives in the region."

### "Drowning in Foreign Schemes"

Ahmad Dawwa, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (12/16): "Statements by some Lebanese politicians show the extent of their loss, confusion, and deep involvement in foreign schemes that do not serve Lebanon....

"These politicians are taking advantage of the tragedies of others and the emotions of the public to serve their own interests at the expense of the Lebanese people.

"We were not surprised yesterday when we saw some of them immediately parrot the anti-Syria statements that a representative of one of the permanent Security Council members made. This raises growing suspicion about the affiliation of these people and their alleged concern for Lebanon's independence, national unity, and Arab relations.

"Directing accusations against Syria and adopting hostile American positions against it constitute direct interference in its affairs....

"These Lebanese parrots should stop turning themselves and Lebanon into fuel for the train of the American-Israeli plan in the region."

### "When the Son Trades in his Father's Blood"

Muhammed Khair al-Jammali, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (12/16): "The Lebanese Druze leader Walid Junblatt suddenly changed from an ally of Syria for over three decades to an enemy, directing random accusations at it and inciting against it day and night, at home and abroad....

"It appears that harming Syria and blaming it for all Lebanon's problems and vices have become a daily obsession for Junblatt. He hurls abuse and curses on Syria and levels accusations against it on every occasion, forgetting his past when he saw in Syria and its presence in Lebanon a safe haven, not only for himself, but also for Lebanon as a whole, and also as the guarantor of Lebanon's unity, sovereignty, and Arab identity and role....

"In previous statements, Junblatt expressed full and strong support for Syria and glorified its role in Lebanon and its pan-Arab positions.... Then Junblatt accused Syria of killing his father in 1977.... Junblatt is trading in the blood of his father, who was an ally of Syria, in an attempt to win people's sympathy....

"If Junblatt knew this secret and kept it all this time, then he had traded in his father's blood all that period to maintain his leadership title."

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